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PHILOSOPHY,
RELIGION AND
EDUCATION

CHRISTIANITY and CRISIS



A Christian Journal of Opinion

'Magnificat Anima Dei'

A fundamental temptation of the church dogs her always and everywhere: to make a jewel box out of an unspeakable treasure. Certain men had once to be corrected when they did this. "We are Abraham's children . . ." A Pressure can become too precious to be freely thrown about; a mission can become a monopoly; and an unenclosable gift can become a prideful private inheritance.

When the Church laments that Christmas has got out of hand she should be certain that what she's crying about is the obfuscation of trivialization of God's glory and not a threatened monopoly. It is right that the Church should be concerned about the banal trivialization of the Feast of the Nativity. It does, to be sure, take a long run and a big jump to get from decanters to heavenly descants and an even more heroic leap to get from mink upholstered cocktail shakers to poor Mary and her baby.

It is not necessary to dilate upon this point, for that will be abundantly taken care of. The people in our churches will say it and listen to it, and the passion of the saying and the acquiescent gravity of the hearing will be a sort of catharsis whereby they are themselves excused from their considerable contributions to the gross national product.

But let us not lament too much that Christmas is celebrated by the unaccredited. Christmas speaks of a love that shines through, judges, transposes and transcends all loves. It speaks of a heavenly caring that irradiates all the multiple cares of earth. It is an ineffable tenderness, an unutterable gift, a holy madness. Only God could be so mad as Christmas declares him to be.

The very stories in which all of this is to be refracted to us warn us not to be too fussily protective about keeping Christmas clean. The shepherds were bums—as any New Testament scholar

can document. Their word was no good in any court; they were regarded archly by the community. They were a shiftless lot. And the wisemen, too, in their person or their motivation, must not be pushed too hard. The tradition of the church, annually re-enacted on a thousand Sunday school platforms by adolescent lads in bathrobes, has transformed the incident. It is probable that they were on an irrelevant search, and it is certain that they were practitioners of a phony science.

But the shepherds did hear the angels, and went off in the proper direction. And the wise men did see a star, and followed it. All the heavenly choirs are not in churches, and not all of heaven's genuine stars are in accredited chancels. And there are dubiously motivated men on phony quests who nevertheless recognize a real Ending when they confront it.

*All this was a long time ago, I remember,
And I would do it again, but set down
This set down
This: were we led all that way for
Birth or Death? There was a Birth, certainly,
We had evidence and no doubt. I had seen birth
and death,
But had thought they were different; this Birth
was
Hard and bitter agony for us, like Death, our
death.
We returned to our places, these Kingdoms,
But no longer at ease here, in the old dispensa-
tion.
With an alien people clutching their gods.
I should be glad of another death.¹*

Men praise the Lord even when they do not praise the Lord. And Christmas is disturbingly received and its promise glimpsed even where Christmas isn't understood. Mr. Cummings was not writing a Christmas Carol when he wrote the

¹T. S. Eliot, "Journey of the Magi," *The Complete Poems and Plays 1909-1950*, New York, Harcourt, Brace & Co., p. 68.

following lines—but there is something here that is permeable to Incarnation. And the people of the Incarnation-born Church had better cock their ears to hear it.

i thank You God for most this amazing day: for the leaping greenly spirits of trees and blue true dream of sky; and for everything which is natural which is infinite which is yes

(i who have died am alive again today, and this is the sun's birthday, this is the birth day of life and of love and wings: and of the gay great happening illimitably earth)

how should tasting touching hearing seeing breathing any—lifted from the no of all nothing—human being doubt unimaginable You?

(now the ears of my eyes awake and now the eyes of my ears are opened)²

J.S.

THE MYSTERY OF CONSCIENCE

THE HUMAN conscience is an enigma to theologians and psychologists alike. A recent book, *The Revolt of Conscience*, by Mrs. Annedore Leber, the widow of one of the victims of Nazi oppression, provides some particularly interesting case studies of the workings of the sensitive conscience.

The book, in which Mrs. Leber relates the lives and final hours of 64 martyrs of the Nazi persecution, is worth noting because it serves to remind people outside Germany that the Germans were not all Nazis and that many Germans were so rigorous in their opposition to the tyranny of Hitler that they forfeited their lives to assert the integrity of conscience.

Some searching questions are prompted about the ability and the inclination of men and women to defy the community, thereby proving that conscience is not purely a social product. But, on the other hand, the study also reveals that there may not be such a thing as a purely individual conscience. Most of the men and women who lost their lives were informed by a tradition of truth and virtue superior to the Nazi creed, and they felt themselves members of a greater community than the nation. But there were some patriots among the martyrs who died in the name of a pure Germany and in protest against the Nazi corruption of national loyalty.

²E. E. Cummings, "i thank You God for most this amazing," Poems: 1923-1954, New York, Harcourt, Brace & Co., p. 464.

The communities of higher loyalty which informed the heroes were various. Many of them were Christian laymen and pastors, both Catholic and Protestant. Quite a few were members of the Socialist Party. The author's husband, Julius Leber, was a prominent Socialist leader involved in the conspiracy against Hitler. Some of the most impressive instances of martyrdom were those of students involved in the revolt at Munich University.

Many lost their lives in loyalty to their friends. Among the most impressive of these is a young architect, Erich Gloeden, and his wife, Lilo, who harbored a German general in the conspiracy against Hitler. The architect tried to protect his wife and mother-in-law by testifying that they did not know the identity of their house guest. But both women scorned this security, declaring that to survive him would make life meaningless for them, and so they were executed with him.

In a number of cases the victims might have fled, but they regarded flight as beneath their dignity. These cases throw some light, but there is still much darkness about the mystery of a sensitive conscience.

The social origins of the heroes reveal that there cannot be a sociology of conscience. Among them are included Willi Haeusseler, a young workingman of Hamburg, Hans Schifftan, a young radio engineer and then, of course, the whole class of aristocratic and military figures who were involved in the plot against Hitler.

American readers will know something of the story of the young theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who spent a year in the U. S. and whose various books, including his *Ethics* and *The Cost of Discipleship*, are widely read here. A chapter is devoted to Bonhoeffer, and a quotation from him admirably sums up the logic of a responsible man with a sensitive conscience: "Any person in a responsible position takes the blame upon himself. He cannot do otherwise. His is the guilt and no one else's. He must accept absolute responsibility, not out of wantonness and revelry but knowing that he must make the choice. He can justify himself to other men on grounds of necessity. His own conscience will acquit him. But before God he can but hope for mercy."

It cannot be argued that this Protestant Christian and highly individual conception of conscience is the only possible one. Many Catholics were martyrs, including leading priests, servant girls and

students. Most of them were supported by the feeling that the visible church was the kingdom of God or directly related to the kingdom and that its judgments supported their conscience.

A book such as this is more valuable than many learned volumes. It introduces us to the anatomy of

the conscience of sensitive men; it proves that no religion, tradition or culture has a monopoly on the spirit of integrity which prompts men to risk or to sacrifice their lives for a principle. And it restores one's confidence in the grandeur of man which shines through his misery. R.N.

Massive Resistance in Virginia

FRANCIS PICKENS MILLER

ON NOVEMBER 5 Virginians elected a new governor. More than 516,000 voters went to the polls to choose between a popular Republican, state Senator Theodore Roosevelt Dalton and a Byrd machine Democrat, Attorney General J. Lindsay Almond, Jr. It was the largest outpouring of citizens in a gubernatorial election in the history of Virginia.

Almond won 327,953 to 188,497. Eliminating Negro voters, Virginia's white citizens favored Almond two to one. When Dalton ran for governor in 1953 he received fewer votes (a total of about 183,000), but these amounted to 45 per cent of the total votes cast that year as contrasted with his 36.5 per cent this year.

The campaign which preceded the election was a sorry affair. Though both candidates professed a determination to preserve segregation their prescriptions for doing so differed. Dalton favored the North Carolina plan while Almond thundered the Byrd formula of "massive resistance" to the Supreme Court's decision on segregation.

The Byrd machine naturally interprets the election returns as an overwhelming endorsement of its defiance of the Supreme Court. And, as James Latimer wrote in the *Richmond Times-Dispatch* (Nov. 7), both Democratic and Republican leaders agree that Almond's triumph reflects the depth of anti-integration feeling among white Virginians.

For Virginians whose thinking is influenced by the Christian faith this is one of the darkest hours in the long history of their beloved Commonwealth. A decade ago Negroes were making genuine progress toward achieving full equality as citizens. One of the ablest Negro lawyers in the state was a member of the city council of Richmond—elected to the governing body of the state's capital city by white as well as Negro votes. The whole atmosphere of race relations was steadily improving. Virginia was prepared for gradual but fundamental adjustments.

Mr. Miller, a contributing editor, has been active in Virginia politics for many years and was a candidate for governor and the United States Senate.

Now all that is changed. The explanation is simple. Virginia has for years been governed by the political machine of U. S. Senator Harry F. Byrd—a machine unequalled among American political organizations for the extent of its pervasive control over the affairs of a state. But between World War II and 1954 the machine had begun to run down. The handwriting was plainly on the wall. This was evident in many ways: in Byrd's loss of control over a majority of his own party in the gubernatorial primary of 1949, in the revulsion for the machine felt by many Democrats as a result of Byrd's throwing the state to Eisenhower in 1952 and finally in a growing spirit of independence among members of the state legislature. It seemed to be only a question of time until the machine would break up and the control of the party would pass to "loyal" Democrats.

Then came the 1954 Supreme Court decision on school segregation. This gave the machine its chance for a new lease on life, and the word began to be passed around that here was an issue which, if properly exploited, might even keep the machine in power for another 20 years.

So, with diabolical cunning, a strategy was evolved that culminated in the war cry of "massive resistance." There is no more powerful emotion than race fear and race hatred. If the only object men have is to secure and maintain political power—if they are undeterred by moral scruples and are blind to the long-range effects of their actions—an appeal to race prejudice is often the quickest way to achieve their objectives. Hitler knew this, and Byrd knows it too.

Consequently, Virginians who understand their world and have some conscience left were faced this autumn with the nauseating spectacle of a political campaign conducted under the banner of the Democratic Party for the purpose of arousing race feeling. To any Virginian aware of his great heritage there could be no more humiliating experience than to be forced to witness so many of

his fellow citizens succumbing to the same emotions which, in a more violent form, drove Germany to her ruin and which now poisons the life of South Africa.

In the long run the Byrd machine will pay dearly for its apostasy. But who cares about the long run, or about national unity or about our reputation among civilized men in the free world? Among power-drunk politicians it is only the short run that counts. The strategy of massive resistance won. Therefore, in their view, it must be right.

Dalton would have been defeated anyway, but it was the use of bayonets at Little Rock that turned defeat into a rout and overwhelmed him by a margin of 27 per cent of the total vote cast. Little Rock was a major disaster for the Republican Party in the South, but it was also a major disaster for men of reason and moderation. Given the present climate of public opinion, Little Rock could happen in Virginia whenever local representative government capitulates to the pressures of mob rule.

Regardless of what the immediate future may have in store, it is apparent that sooner or later the policy of massive resistance will run head-on into the policy of the Federal Government. And, in spite of the wishful thinking of many southerners, there can be but one result of that encounter.

As Byrd's policy collapses in ruin moderate men will have an opportunity to provide leadership. The "moderate" in Virginia is not an "integrationist" as that word is currently used in the South. Many moderates regard the Supreme Court's decision, and particularly its timing, as one of the

major domestic blunders of the century. But they have a knowledge of history, some acquaintance with the climate of world opinion and a decent respect for the law of the land. Further, they are aware of the grave moral issues involved in this crisis. At the same time they remember that while the Supreme Court ruled out compulsory segregation it did not decree compulsory integration.

Therefore moderates advocate state policies aimed at discovering *community by community on what terms the consent of each local community can be secured to live within the letter of the law and the spirit of the law.*

Much precious time has been lost. Irreparable damage has already been done. But something can be saved out of the wreckage if Christian men and women of both races will do their duty.

For nearly a century we have had legal segregation in the South. It is on its way out, but a terrific price is being paid for its disappearance. In place of legal segregation there is now appearing a new and, in many ways, more ominous kind of segregation—a segregation of the mind and of the spirit, not unilateral but bilateral—consciously practiced by members of both races against each other. This growing mutuality of mistrust and dislike bodes ill for the future of the South and of the nation.

When communications break down between the leaders of two races within the same state the very fabric of society itself is seriously weakened. Perhaps the main function of the Christian Church during these dark days is the function of restoring and maintaining lines of communication.

Only Government Can Do It

THE PUBLICATION of the decennial census of population by the United States Bureau of the Census is the most valuable primary source of sociological data we have. No other agency or instrumentality can gather so systematically and comprehensively the kind of primary data found in these decennial reports. From them we elicit knowledge necessary for the orderly and proper functioning of our social, political and economic life. These reports contribute substantially to our fund of knowledge about ourselves.

The Bureau of the Census is now proposing to

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YOSHIO FUKUYAMA

include the question, "What is his religion?" in the next general census of population to be taken in 1960. The addition of this question in the enumerator's population schedule, together with the usual questions about socio-economic characteristics will make the 1960 census a more valuable and complete report. The Bureau is to be commended and encouraged to do this.

Interest in this proposal was first shown by the professional users of census data which include social scientists, educators, leaders in commerce and industry, health and welfare authorities, public officials and planners. Last January, Dr. Robert W. Burgess, director of the Census Bureau, addressed

members of the Religious Research Fellowship, outlining this proposal. (The Fellowship is a national organization of men and women engaged in religious research for church-related agencies and includes seminary and university professors.) At that time Dr. Burgess expressed concern that very little interest was being shown by religious groups to the Bureau's proposal to include a question on religion in the next census. Subsequently, official action in support of it was taken by units of the Congregational Christian, Presbyterian, U.S.A. and Methodist churches. Only in recent months have religious groups publicly shown any interest or concern.

"Not New - - Not Unique"

On July 8, 1957 Rabbi Israel Goldstein, president of the American Jewish Congress, in a letter to the editor of *The New York Times* began a series of correspondence in those columns opposing this proposal on religious grounds. Mr. Leo Pfeffer's article in *The Christian Century* (Oct. 30) is a restatement of the American Jewish Congress' position.

Mr. Pfeffer's thesis is that "fundamental questions of constitutional law and public policy" are involved in this proposal and because of this it is "literally none of the government's business." In arguing this thesis, he presents an impressive array of court decisions which are, for the most part, irrelevant. His assumptions about the purpose and use of census data reflect unfamiliarity with them, and he turns to the eminent Dean of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York city rather than to a more technically competent authority to discount the sociological value of the proposal.

For the sake of keeping the record straight, several facts need restatement. The first is that the inclusion of religious data in the enumeration of population is not new to the Bureau of the Census. In the decennial population censuses of 1850 to 1880, religious statistics were obtained along with other characteristics of the population. The religious data for 1880 were never published, however, while limited data for previous years were published.

In 1902 the Permanent Census Act authorized a Census of Religious Bodies to be taken once every ten years. The first Census of Religious Bodies authorized by the act was taken in 1906. As the name suggests, it is a census of religious *organizations* rather than an inquiry into the religious affiliations of individuals comprising the popula-

tion. The last such census was published in 1936. In 1946 data were gathered by the Bureau but were never published due to the incompleteness of the returns.

In 1956 the Census of Religious Bodies was not taken due to lack of interest shown by both government and religious groups. Some feel that the lack of cooperation shown by the churches in 1946 plus the failure of the government to provide a budget for the census in 1956 brings an end to the Census of Religious Bodies.

The present proposal for the Bureau of the Census is one which is to include data on the individual's religion together with the usual data about age, sex, occupation, income, education, etc. These data will be reported by states, counties and minor civil divisions. A question about one's religion has been asked regularly in connection with the general census of population by 28 out of 48 nations, including Canada, according to a recent survey by the United Nations Demographic and Social Statistics Branch. In this sense, the Bureau's recommendation is not unique among the nations of the world.

Preference, Not Belief

It must also be clearly stated at the outset that this is a question concerning religious *preference* rather than belief or behavior. The published statements of spokesmen for the American Jewish Congress imply that an exploration into one's religious *belief* or *practice* (membership or attendance) is involved in this proposal. On this mistaken assumption is based the entire framework of argument that the proposal is a violation of the First Amendment which guarantees the free exercise of religion and the prohibition of religious establishment. We fail to see how the reporting of religious preference infringes on the free exercise of religion any more than the collection of data on home, television, or refrigerator ownership infringes on the rights of individuals to own property.

The assumption is also made by these critics that interest in including such a question comes *primarily* from church groups "who have no hesitation in asserting the great value that results would have in church planning and recruitment." It is true that such data will be useful for such purposes. It is also true that the reports of the Bureau have long been useful to churches and other voluntary agencies whose planning and administration are based on the intelligent use of

facts. Mr. Pfeffer seems to discount the importance and influence of the professional users of census data who have actually shown a more active interest than religious groups in their support of this proposal. These users are not confined to "sociologists and demographers" whom Mr. Pfeffer belittles.

They include health and medical insurance organizations, hospitals, public health agencies, welfare and other community service agencies, school authorities, administrators of colleges and universities, metropolitan and city planning agencies, marketing research, social survey and public opinion polling agencies and official commissions on human relations. The interest of these groups is based primarily on the value such data would have for research which will enable them to appraise more accurately the social situation to which they must necessarily address themselves. Whatever value the data may have for church planning and recruitment is secondary to the primary value these statistics will yield to scientists in their pursuit of knowledge.

Voluntary Response

As professional users of this type of data, we are less skeptical than our critics about the practicability of making responses to the religious question voluntary. The Bureau's recommendation is that a refusal will constitute an adequate answer to this question and would be tabulated accordingly. In a technical memorandum submitted to the Bureau last June, the Religious Fellowship suggested a system of classifying responses to this question. In this classification of religious bodies was included a category, "Religion not reported." This category would include all those who for conscientious or other reasons choose not to reveal their religious preferences as well as those from whom data is not available. It presupposes no moral or legal judgment as to the person's religious position, but merely states a fact. The Bureau is clear in its position that no individual will be criminally prosecuted insofar as a refusal to answer will be considered a proper answer to this query. Mr. Pfeffer seems to forget that before any person can be criminally prosecuted, charges must be brought against him. This the Census Bureau clearly does not intend to do.

Were he and his colleagues more familiar with the publications of the Bureau, they would recognize immediately that, in practice, not all questions are answered in a census inquiry. For example, in the 1950 census, the income of families and un-

related individuals were not reported for 2,872,940 persons (5.8% of the total). Persons between the ages of five and 24 failing to report the number of school years completed were 1,327,110 in number (2.9%) while another 2,413,180 persons (2.8%) over 25 years of age failed to report the number of school years completed. In 1950 occupations were not reported by 1,366,064 persons in the experienced labor force (2.3%).

All this would suggest that if Mr. Pfeffer's arguments were sound, the 1950 census should have involved the conviction and imprisonment of millions of citizens in the U.S. His fear of the American people's resistance to this kind of inquiry is wholly out of keeping with the facts. The Bureau in its recent pretesting of this question in connection with its current population surveys learned that resistance to this type of question was unusually low. In its first pretest in Milwaukee in November 1956, only seven persons out of 837 refused to answer this question. The refusal rate was .8%. In other surveys it was learned that the refusal rate on school years completed was 1.3% and 7% on income. It is apparent that experience shows that people are more sensitive on privacy when it concerns their education and income and less when it concerns their religious preference. In the Milwaukee survey, 96.8% of those interviewed identified themselves with some religious body.

Rabbi Goldstein, in the letter mentioned above, argued that such a proposal "would make out of the Federal government an agent of religious groups and would employ government instrumentalities for church purposes." Mr. Pfeffer likewise argues that this proposal is "using the government as an instrumentality to promote Church purposes." Would they also argue that the reporting of the country of birth of the foreign born makes of our government an agent of foreign powers,

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IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

JAMES GUSTAFSON discusses the role of the churches in a business culture.

"While their profits have spoken, the churches have enjoyed whatever financial support they could gain from the business community for their institutions. . . . The prestige that laymen have gained in the business world has been borrowed . . . the prominence of a layman is usually more dependent upon his success in the world than his personal piety or social righteousness."



Saint Hereticus

Scripture Lesson
for
Advent 1957

Somehow I never made the canon. This is, to any saint, a source of disappointment, particularly when one feels, as I do, that Jude didn't really deserve the honor either.

But I have recently had my hope renewed, not by my fellow heretics, but by the orthodox. For hath not Barth said, "The canon is not closed."?' I agree. Who am I to challenge Barth? But I can go him one better. I can point out where the canon needs to be extended.

We need a fifth gospel. It could be called, though I may not be the one to initiate the suggestion, the Gospel according to St. Hereticus. I would not claim originality for its message any more than my distinguished colleagues in this company would claim originality for their contributions to the canon. I would claim only that I have been faithful, in a most literal way, to the oral traditions and the written records about the birth of Christ which circulate freely in the second half of the twentieth century for the benefit of little children.

A Biblical critic should have the same freedom with my gospel that he has with all the others. In fact, it ought to provide him with a field day as he disentangles the various traditions I have relied on, such as the G source (Gimbel's); the various *pericopes* of the C source (commercials), notably C_r (radio) and C_t (television); the S₂ source (Sunday School); the P source, notably P₁ (pageants), and P₂ (Protestant pulpit); and the C₂ source (Christmas carols). It may be noted by the most discerning that there is occasionally a slight reliance, at considerable remove, on two further multiple sources, the RSV and the KJV, with which, of course, my readers are well acquainted.²

Just to get the matter out into the open, and give some future church council the materials with which to get down to work, I offer here the second chapter of the Gospel according to St. Hereticus.

¹Barth, *Kirchliche Dogmatik*, I, 2, para. 19, subsection 2, pp. 473-481, my translation, condensed.

²I have left the text in the American koiné, without attempting to rearrange it. This would be tampering illicitly with the text. Hereticus 2:27, for example, has obviously gotten misplaced.

CHAPTER 2

1 Once upon a time God lived at the North Pole. He wanted little boys and girls to be happy and have lots of good times. But if they wanted toys they had to be good. ²So God sent a space man to tell the shepherds not be afraid, because even though Santa Claus was coming to town, Herod was going to kill all the little babies. Next week on the ABC television network the three wisemen watched the baby Jesus coming to earth ³in a space ship that was so bright that it looked like a star. ⁴They followed the space ship for a long time. But they didn't get tired because they came in a sled that was drawn by three camels named Prancer and Donner and Blitzen, and the sled went jingle, jingle, jingle all the way. ⁵The noise frightened the shepherds' sheep, who started to run, and the pilot of the space ship leaned out ⁶to tell the shepherds not to spank their sheep because this would make them sore afraid.

He said that if they went to the Bethlehem Steel company they could see Jesus in a manger with an electric light bulb in it to keep the baby from getting cold. ⁷But the baby in the manger was only a doll so it didn't matter.

8 The kings finally got there and had presents for the baby. One had some gold from Fort Knox, and another king named Frank Incense gave Jesus "murr" or something. ⁹The shepherds didn't see the space men anymore ¹⁰but they decked the hall where Jesus was with boughs of holly, so that if bad Herod went there he would prick his finger and die.

11 But Santa Claus got down the chimney before Herod had a dream, and left a bowlful of jelly for Mary and Joseph because they couldn't get into the hotel for supper. ¹²Mary was great with child, so she was the baby sitter while Joseph went to the garage and got the donkey. ¹³Then they took a trip to the desert so Jesus could play with the sand toys Santa Claus had left, and then Santa Claus gave them a ride over the Red Sea in his sleigh ¹⁴so that the Egyptians wouldn't drown them.

15 Then God went back to the North Pole ¹⁶until next Christmas and took off his red suit ¹⁷and made more toys. ¹⁸But it's always Christmas if dad gets a carton of filter cigarettes that draw better than all other leading brands. ¹⁹Impartial tests show. ²⁰And the shepherds were late getting back to their flocks because they were keeping their watch by night and couldn't see what time it said. But they left a special message for us ²¹about telling mom to go down to the friendly grocer and buy a giant economy size box of Zuz, with a plastic wind-up angel inside absolutely free, ²²complete with launching platform.

23 Since Jesus gave presents to all the animals, we ought to give presents ²⁴even to our aunts and uncles. He liked all the animals in the manger, because they were wearing swaddling clothes to keep warm and there was a donkey and a cow and a horse ²⁵and two sheep and a bear and a lion and a hippopotamus and a pushmepullyou ²⁶and all the people wore clothes made from old living room curtains.

27 Herod's other name was Scrooge.

Here endeth the reading of the first lesson. Hath not Barth said, "The canon is not closed."?

Only Government Can Do It

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or that the data gathered concerning television ownership makes it an agent of the television manufacturers?

Other Agencies Are Inadequate

We agree that government should never be asked to do things which voluntary associations can do for themselves. But the fact remains that no other instrumentality in existence can collect so systematically and comprehensively the kind of data suggested by this proposal. Being collected at the same time with other characteristics of the population, it would have utmost value to those users of census data who depend on them to describe and study as accurately and completely as possible the essential characteristics of our population. Being a question of preference, rather than belief or practice, it will yield new knowledge about the American people, adding to the socio-economic characteristics now available a description of our religious characteristics.

How important the religion of the American people is as related to other facts about ourselves is perhaps decisive in deciding for or against this

a la 'HIDDEN PERSUADERS'

Madison Avenue Men will tell you that books and magazine subscriptions (according to a recent poll) rank high among the ten "most appreciated" Christmas gifts. We did not take a poll, but we do know that our friends like books and magazines, and we suspect that *your* friends do too. Why not be doubly appreciated this year by giving them *both*? You can, for only \$3—we are including a FREE copy of our new paperback, *What the Christian Hopes for in Society*, with each Christmas gift subscription.

James O'Gara, Managing Editor of *The Commonwealth*, said in a recent review that this book and *Christianity and Crisis* are "more important than any bestseller or mass-circulation magazine."

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proposal. We believe, with the supporters of this question, that primary knowledge about the religion of the American people is as important, if not more so, as knowledge we now possess about our income, our housing and the condition of our plumbing.

Finally, it must be said that although this question is related to individuals, there is no way possible under long existing laws for the use of this data except for statistical reporting purposes by the Bureau. This law has not been abrogated since its inception over a century and a half ago. Some have expressed fear of religious persecution when the religious identities of individuals is available to the government. It would appear likely that if the religious affiliation of any person were desired there would be far simpler ways of getting this information than by invading the privacy of the Census Bureau's files.

What is needed at this point is a more adequate doctrine of the relationship of religion to government. Our government is not an autonomous and capricious agent to be feared and suspected. Rather, it is an expression of the collective will of the people, serving its interests and purposes. We firmly believe that the Census Bureau's proposal to report the religious preferences of the American people is relevant to a more complete census of population and merits our support. Only government can do it.

CHRISTIANITY and CRISIS

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